

REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, the claims 2, 8-9, 12, and 17-22 have been amended and claim 1 has been cancelled. Claims 2-22 are pending and under consideration.

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in light of the following discussion and in view of the present amendment, is respectfully requested.

This amendment is believed to place the application in condition for allowance, and entry therefore is respectfully requested. In the alternative, entry of this amendment is requested as placing the application in better condition for appeal by, at least, reducing the number of issues outstanding.

Entry of Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116

The Applicant requests entry of this Rule 116 Response because the amendment does not significantly alter the scope of the claims and places the application at least into a better form for purposes of appeal. No new features or new issues are being raised.

I. Claim Objections

In the Office Action, claims 1-22 were objected to. Independent claim 2 has been amended in response to this objection. Furthermore, it is submitted that adding additional clarifiers, such as first, second, and third, to the claimed axial directions as suggested by the Examiner is unnecessary. Such claimed axial directions are already clarified and distinguished from one another by their subsequent clarifiers, such as “an axial direction **of the flexible linear**” and “an axial direction **of the drive shaft**” and “axial direction **of the support shaft**.”

Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

II. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112

In the Office Action, claims 1-22 were rejected under the second paragraph of 35 USC § 112 as being indefinite. Various claims have been amended in response to this rejection. Accordingly, withdrawal of the § 112 rejection is respectfully requested.

III. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

In the Office Action, claims 1, 8, 12-13, and 15-22 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by “Saladin” (U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2002/0126799).

Claim 1 has been cancelled.

Claims 8-9, 12-14, and 15-22 have been amended to depend from independent claim 2, which has been amended to be allowable as indicated by the Examiner. Thus, it is submitted that claims 8-9, 12-14, and 15-22 are also now allowable.

IV. Allowable subject matter

In the Office Action, claims 2-7 and 10-11 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 2 has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Thus, it is submitted that claim 2, and claims 3-8 and 10-11 depending therefrom, are in a condition suitable for allowance.

CONCLUSION

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

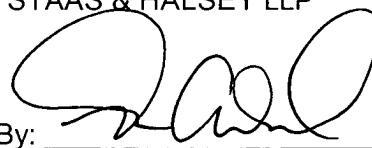
Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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